



COPTIC ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHERN USA
ST. STEPHEN CHRISTIAN RETREAT CENTER



June 7, 2010

My dear brethren,

May the blessings of the Apostles' Fast be with you all.

It is with great pleasure I would like to congratulate everyone for the completion of the closing process for the St. Stephen Retreat Center located in Titusville, FL. It is through the grace of God that this long awaited search has concluded with a beautiful place for retreats, fellowship and mediation to be called our own.

I thank God, foremost, for His blessings and guidance in finding this facility and for facilitating the closing process and St. Mary, the mother of God, St. Stephen, and St. Joseph the Elder for their intercessions. I would also like to thank all the church members for supporting this project through prayers, donations, and loans. It is through your love and generosity the Diocese was able to collect the amount needed for the closing by the deadline date.

The current church season focuses on service shown to us by the Apostles themselves. St. Paul tells us *"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;"* (1 Corinthians 9:19). The St. Stephen Retreat Center will be a project serving the youth, families, women, and senior citizens through spiritual retreats, St. Mary Convent, and St. Joseph the Elder Senior Citizens Home.

As we begin this new journey together, I would like to invite everyone to the grand opening for the St. Stephen Retreat Center on July 17, 2010. More information will be posted on the Diocese site as soon as it is available.

May the Lord continue to bless us and guide us in the endeavor *"giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Ephesians 5:20).

God bless you,

Bishop Youssef
Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States